

NEW INSIGHTS REGARDING THE CREATION AND CHARACTER DELINEATION OF MAXI RUBÍN AND PLÁCIDO ESTUPIÑÁ IN *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA*

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Scholars have long agreed that one of the hallmarks of Galdós's artistry is his ability to create interesting and memorable characters. At times the process of creation of some of these characters is so complex that we have not yet savoured fully Galdós's multifaceted artistry. The aim of the present study is to share new insights concerning the creation and delineation of two important characters: Maximiliano Rubín and Plácido Estupiñá of *Fortunata y Jacinta*.

Let us begin with the first of these by noting that scholars have probed the possibility that (José Antonio) Maximilian von Hapsburg, whom the French installed as Emperor of Mexico in 1864, might be some kind of a referent/prototype for Galdós's Maximiliano.¹ However, aside from the fact that Maxi's aunt is named Guadalupe, such an investigation does not yield significant results. There is, nevertheless, another Hapsburg who is known to have shared some of the same characteristics that one observes in Maxi Rubín: Maximilian Franz von Hapsburg, Maria Theresa's youngest son (and brother of Marie Antoinette). He was effeminate, spoke in a falsetto voice, suffered from paranoia, and had a mother who openly said that he was incapable of satisfying any woman or fathering any children. Such a list of traits in common with Maxi Rubín suggests that Galdós did indeed have in mind a definite prototype, a "tocayo" who is worthy of our investigation. Recognizing her son as unsuitable for marriage, even by the standards of Hapsburg political alliances, Maria Theresa saw no recourse but to push Max Franz toward the celibate vows of the Church and the Teutonic Order, so that in these offices he might rule over the Hapsburg possessions on the Rhine. Accordingly, Max Franz became the last Elector of Cologne, as well as Prince-Bishop of Münster. His royal court was at Bonn, where he greatly encouraged music and the other arts. Mozart and Haydn were among the famous musicians who played at court for him and his guests. Max Franz was, very importantly, Beethoven's first patron and the person to whom Beethoven originally dedicated his First Symphony. When Max Franz perceived that Napoleon would one day occupy Bonn, he influenced very much Beethoven's career by persuading his protégé to move to Vienna for greater safety, cultural advantages, and studies with Haydn.

It is helpful to remember that Galdós made his print debut in Madrid as a music critic and was always very enthusiastic about the works of Rossini and Beethoven. He possessed sheet music of both composers (for his personal piano and organ playing) and owned a bust of each, from which he made pencil sketches. It was said that he knew all of Beethoven's symphonies by heart, and often stayed at concerts, only long enough to hear the Beethoven selections (Ruiz de la Serna and Cruz Quintana 327). As early as 1866 Galdós was knowledgeable concerning the personal life of Beethoven, when he reviewed

Castro y Serrano's *Cuartetos del Conservatorio: consideraciones sobre la música clásica*.² Here, or in further reading, Galdós would have learned what an important role Max Franz von Hapsburg played in the life of Beethoven.³

Both Maximilians, Galdós's and Maria Theresa's, had a miserable, sickly childhood, which they survived with difficulty. Consequently, Max Franz gave his tutors very little of a positive nature to report to his mother, the Empress. Certainly, it was a major blow to Hapsburg pride to have to admit that "Maximilians körperliche Konstitution nicht stark genug für die Anforderungen des Soldatenstandes war" ["Maximilian's physical constitution was not strong enough for the demands of a soldier's profession"] (Braubach 48).⁴ By age eighteen, the frail Max Franz was well known for timidity, apathy, laziness, and a desire to withdraw from human contact. He preferred to spend the entire day sleeping and never leave his room; he also manifested symptoms of paranoia:

Alle Versuche, ihm aus dieser Apathie herauszureissen, hätten als völlig zweckloss aufgeben werden müssen, umsomehr, als damit ein reizbares Misstrauen gegen jedermann verbunden sei. Vor der ganzen Welt denke er schlecht; aber auch gegen sich selbst sei er argwöhnisch und fürchte immer eine Blösse zu machen. Sprächen zwei Männer in seiner Nähe miteinander, so suche er zu erfahren, um was es sich handle [sic], stets in der Angst man könne von ihm reden. (Braubach 38)

[All attempts to pull him out of this apathy had to be abandoned as completely useless, all the more so because it was bound up with an irrascible mistrust of everyone. He thought badly of the whole world; he was, however, also apprehensive about himself and always fearful of revealing himself. Should two men be speaking together near him, he would attempt to find out what was being discussed, continually afraid that one might be talking about him.]

Never did Max Franz succeed in overcoming his "Misstrauen gegen alle Menschen" ["mistrust of every human being"], an affliction which at times became "unbegrenzt und daher oft unbegründet und ungerecht" ["boundless and therefore often unfounded and unjust"] (Braubach 240).

Portraits of Max Franz do not militate against the opinion that he may indeed have been "testosteronally challenged" (Braubach 1, 176, 192; Marek 55). Indeed, as already noted, the high falsetto voice of the Austrian prince was well-known. In fact, Mozart claimed that he always spoke in such a manner (Anderson 779). Although Maria Theresa would preferred to have increased Hapsburg possessions by marrying her youngest son to some important European princess, she openly admitted that "seinem ganzen Naturell nach ihr wenig geeignet schien, eine Frau glücklich zu machen" ("according to his entire basic nature, he seemed to her very little suited for making any woman happy") (Braubach 26).

After a protracted illness in early manhood, Max Franz's health did improve, and subsequently he was able to carry out his duties for the Hapsburg family in their westerly possessions along the Rhine. In fact, the court of this sincere and successful ruler came to have some reknown, as music, theatre, and education flourished. Important people liked to stop off in Bonn on their way to the leading cities of Europe, and Max Franz customarily took his own musicians with him when he travelled and visited other courts. Unfortu-

nately, the possessions which he governed became entangled in the great power struggles between Prussia and Austria on the one hand, and France on the other. Repeatedly forced to flee from Bonn, Max Franz lived long enough to see his own sister, Marie Antoinette (and her husband, Louis XVI), dethroned and guillotined during the French Revolution. Subsequently, the French army, imbued with the liberal ideas of the Revolution, forced Max Franz out of Bonn and into a permanent, unhappy exile during his last seven years of life.

In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Galdós clearly and repeatedly calls attention to his characters' real-life prototypes, who were contemporaries of Beethoven, such as Napoleon Bonaparte (for Mauricia la Dura) and Gioacchino Rossini (for Plácido Estupiñá),⁵ so it is no surprise, really, to find also clear correspondences between Max Franz von Hapsburg and Maxi Rubín. Let us begin by noting that Galdós's Maxi is also sickly as a child. The narrator says, "era raquítico, de naturaleza pobre y linfática, absolutamente privado de gracias personales. Como que había nacido de siete meses y luego me le criaron con biberón y con una cabra" (II,i,1; 449). Like Max Franz, poor health continues to plague him until early manhood, when a severe, watershed illness leaves him also somewhat better prepared for adult life (II,i,2; 458).⁶ In a further analogy to the prince of Europe's largest empire, Maxi Rubín also is forced to accept the fact that he is too delicate for military training. It is striking that, of all the possible locations in Madrid that Galdós might have chosen, he places young Maxi's domicile (at the corner of Claudio Coello and Pajaritos), where he can watch from his third story window the cadets of the nearby Estado Mayor military school on parade:⁷

no hay idea de la admiración que le causaban aquellos jóvenes, ni del arrobamiento que le producía la franja azul en el pantalón, el ros, la levita con las hojas de roble bordadas en el cuello, y la espada... ¡tan chicos algunos y ya con espada! Algunas noches, Maximiliano soñaba que tenía su tizona, bigote y uniforme, y hablaba dormido. Despierto deliraba también, figurándose haber crecido una cuarta, tener las piernas derechas y el cuerpo no tan caído para adelante [...] y que se le ponía un empaque marcial como el del más pintado. ¡Qué suerte tan negra! Si él no fuera tan desgarrado de cuerpo, y le hubieran puesto a estudiar aquella carrera, ¡cuánto se habría aplicado! (II,i,2; 457-58)

Later Doña Lupe moves with Maxi from this neighbourhood (to Chamberi)—and again analogous to the situation of the Austrian prince—"Maximiliano fue perdiendo poco a poco la ilusión de los alumnos [militares] de Estado Mayor" (II,i,2; 459).

During late adolescence and early manhood both Max Franz and Maxi Rubín were very shy, insecure, and emotionally troubled individuals; at times they manifested unusual behaviour (Braubach 38-41; *Fortunata y Jacinta* II,i,2; 458-60). Both young men would have preferred to avoid their problems by never getting up in the morning. The Empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had sufficient courtiers to get Max Franz out of bed, but Doña Lupe alone has the entire responsibility for her Maxi. Even as late as the first two years of Maxi's pharmacy studies,

La pereza y la debilidad le retenían en el lecho [...] y la pobre doña Lupe pasaba la pena negra para sacarle de las sábanas. Levantábase ella muy temprano, y se ponía a dar golpes con el almirez junto a la misma cabeza del durmiente, que las más de las veces no se daba por entendido de tal estruendo. Luego le hacía cosquillas, acostaba al gato con él, le retiraba las sábanas [...] el despertar del estudiante era obra de romanos y una de las cosas en que más energía y constancia desplegaba doña Lupe. (II,i,2; 455-56)

Both Maximilians had the habit of taking solitary, nocturnal strolls in their respective cities. Max Franz was wont to wander through the streets of Bonn and Münster at five o'clock in the morning in a dirty white cloak (Marek 57; Braubach 236-37). Erotic motivations may have been a factor in the prince's strolls,⁸ but in the case of Maxi Rubín there is no doubt. In fact, Galdós takes advantage of Maxi's penchant for night-time strolls to apprise the reader of the current state of his character's psycho-sexual development:

En estas excursiones [...] el goce de Maximiliano consistía en pensar e imaginar libremente y a sus anchas, figurándose realidades y volando sin tropiezo por los espacios de lo posible, aunque fuera improbable. Andar, andar y soñar al compás de las piernas, como si su alma repitiera una música cuyo ritmo marcaban los pies, era lo que a él le deleitaba. Y como encontraba mujeres bonitas, solas, en parejas o en grupos, bien con toquilla a la cabeza o con manto, gozaba mucho en afirmarse a sí mismo que *aquellas eran honradas*, y en seguir las hasta ver adónde iban. “¡Una honrada! ¡Que me quiera una honrada!” Tal era su ilusión ... Pero no había que pensar en tal cosa. Sólo de pensar que le dirigía la palabra a una honrada, le temblaban las carnes. (II,i,2; 460-61)

As the adult Max Franz lacked physical virility, so too does Galdós's Maxi: “Era de cuerpo pequeño y no bien conformado, tan endeble que parecía que se lo iba a llevar el viento, la cabeza chata, el pelo lacio y ralo. [...] Su piel era lustrosa, fina, cutis de niño con transparencias de mujer desmedrada y clorótica” (II,i,2; 456). Maxi's physical condition also influences other people's evaluation of his libidinal potential. Doña Lupe's opinion of her nephew is as realistic as had been Maria Theresa's of her son. Maxi's aunt “dejaba a Maximiliano en libertad, porque le creía inaccesible a los vicios por razón de su pobreza física” (II,i,2; 458). Moreover, she even tells him, “por el lado de las mujeres no temo nada, francamente. Ni a ti te gusta eso, ni puedes aunque te gustara.” (III,ii,5; 498). Maxi's rival, Juanito Santa Cruz, is equally negative. When attempting to justify his own infidelity to his wife, Juanito says, concerning Fortunata, “la casan con un hombre que no es un hombre, con un hombre que no puede ser marido de nadie” (III,ii,3; 61). Even earlier, near the end of Part Two, Galdós had delineated the stereotypical evaluation that a person such as Maxi traditionally suffers: a bystander asserts that the recent fight between Maxi and Juanito certainly was not a “cuestión de faldas [...] ¿[...] no ves que es marica?” (II,vii,10; 708). At this juncture, one also encounters for the first time the falsetto voice, that trait of Max Franz's that captured Mozart's attention: “el ardor de la lucha había determinado como una relajación de la laringe, en términos que la voz se le había vuelto enteramente de falsete. Salían de su

garganta las palabras como el acento de un impúber" (II,vii,10; 707). And Maxi Rubín's new voice continues as he is carried home to Doña Lupe's house, fulminating, "con aquella voz de falsete que era otra novedad para su tía" (II,vii,11; 709).

Earlier, like the Empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before her, Doña Lupe would have preferred to marry her Maxi into families of her social circle. Olimpia Samaniego and Rufina Torquemada are the candidates mentioned, with the latter being given preference. However, Lupe has to face reality, and she explains why she did not pursue the matter: "Al verle tan huraño, y que se escondía cuando entraba doña Silva con su hija, creía que hablarle a este chico de mujeres era como mentarle al diablo la cruz" (II, iii,3; 532). And the servant girl, Papitos, tells Maxi that Lupe has even confided to Rufina's mother that "*vusté* no se puede casar." Indeed, "se lo decía a doña Silva la otra noche" (II,ii,6; 502).

The most important woman in the life of each Maximilian perceived the inability of each to procreate. Maria Theresa's disappointment with her youngest son included being deprived of grandchildren. In a letter replying to an inquiry regarding future plans for Max Franz, she wrote that she feared never to be able "nicht einmal von einem Enkel zu gedenken, so lange ich lebe" ["to think of having a grandchild [from him], as long as I live"] (Braubach 54). In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, it is not the mother figure (Doña Lupe), but, more appropriately, Fortunata herself who perceives that her approaching marriage will not result in children. When Maxi repeatedly speaks of "sucesión" and the possibility of becoming "el marido que pronto va a ser padre," Fortunata's reaction is spontaneous laughter, along with the un verbalized thought, "De eso sí que estás tú libre" (II,iv,8; 589).

Max Franz's biographer emphasizes that one of the Austrian prince's prime defensive reactions to the stresses of life was paranoia (Braubach 239-42). Quite pronounced during his adolescence, this affliction never completely ceased. Certainly, it is no surprise that Galdós, after having incarnated in Maxi a number of the same childhood and adolescent traits evidenced by Max Franz, should also follow suit with paranoia. A major difference, however, is that Galdós chooses to spare Maxi until he is fully enmeshed in an impossible marriage. At this point, Maxi develops a full-blown, sometimes incapacitating, case of this mental disorder, leading to the the dénouement of his life story with commitment to the Leganés mental asylum.

Even the final days of the two Maximilians are rather similar. Napoleon Bonaparte was a major factor in the destruction of all that Max Franz had accomplished, and the Napoleon look-alike, Mauricia la Dura, is the prime subversive force—working through Fortunata—in the destruction of Maxi Rubín's marriage. Finally, Maxi Rubín must leave his home and career in Madrid and spend his own form of exile in the mental asylum in the nearby village of Leganés. The final sentence of the novel reveals his acceptance of this fate (even as Galdós retains emphasis on the character's name): "Pongan al llamado Maximiliano Rubín en un palacio o un muladar... lo mismo da" (IV,vi,16; 542). The other Maximilian—although a prince of the mighty Hapsburg family—also had to pass his final years in exile, "in various palaces and died sad, obese, and unimportant. He would be remembered only by professors of history and would be undistinguishable to the layman from most of the Maximillians and Franzes who dot the Hapsburg history, were it not for the fact that he aided a musician named Beethoven" (Marek 64).

Another character with a connection to Beethoven is Plácido Estupiñá. Although with Maxi Rubín, Galdós does not call the reader's attention to readily-recognizable physical traits shared by Maxi Rubín with a commonly-known historical personage, he certainly does want the reader to recognize a historical referent in the case of Plácido Estupiñá:

Los que quieran conocer su rostro, miren el de Rossini, ya viejo, como nos le han transmitido las estampas y fotografías del gran músico, y pueden decir que tienen delante al divino Estupiñá. La forma de la cabeza, la sonrisa, el perfil sobre todo, la nariz corva, la boca hundida, los ojos picarescos, eran trasunto fiel de aquella hermosura un tanto burlona, que con la acentuación de las líneas de la vejez se aproximaba algo a la imagen de Polichinela. La edad iba dando al perfil de Estupiñá un cierto parentesco con el de las cotorras. (I,iii,3; 177)

The repeated reminders of this description⁹ certainly justify an inquiry into the life and personality of Rossini, which, in turn, do reveal important similarities between the Italian maestro and Galdós's character. Certainly Galdós had done considerable research concerning the life of the Italian composer as evidenced in his two-part article, entitled "Rossini," which appeared the 13th and the 14th of November, 1867 in the *Revista del Movimiento Intelectual de Europa* (Hoar 240-52). Consequently, we can now address certain questions concerning Plácido's characterization: why does he always wear a green cape, delight in being a consummate smuggler, love to shop daily for the best food items, live up many flights of stairs, and chatter like a magpie? To answer these questions, we have to go beyond the narrow focus concerning the popular Italian composer in Geoffrey Ribbans's otherwise fine study (149). Ribbans shows well the relationship between the Estupiñá sketched in the Alpha MS (where Rossini is already mentioned) and the completed character appearing in the final printed version of the novel. He also reminds us that as early as 1866 Galdós had noted a striking physical similarity between Rossini and Mesonero Romanos. In the 1866 article, "D. Ramón Mesonero Romanos," Galdós had said: "Algo de la bondadosa y a la par burlona sonrisa de Rossini hay en la fisonomía del *Curioso Parlante*, fisonomía expresiva, llena de gracia y afabilidad, siempre serena, respirando buen humor e ingeniosa travesura" (Shoemaker 259). Twenty-two years later in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, as Galdós combines aspects of both Rossini and Mesonero in his new character, Plácido Estupiñá, he devises a different method of communicating similarities between his character and Mesonero Romanos, emphasizing now that they were born on the same day (19 July 1803), and also that Plácido too has witnessed personally many of the historical events of their beloved Madrid (I,iii,1; 165-67). With no need now to mention Mesonero in the physical description of Plácido, Galdós chooses to concentrate (in the description already quoted) exclusively on the Rossini-like aspects of his new "personaje's" appearance.¹⁰

In the paragraph following the physical description, Galdós's narrator states that, except for one brief period each year, Plácido always wears a heavy green cloak ("una capa de paño verde, que no se le caía de los hombros sino en lo que va de julio a septiembre" [I,iii,3; 177]). Later Plácido is seen "cuando atravesaba las calles de Madrid con [...] su

capa verde" (I,vi,5; 260-61). Why did Galdós choose to make green the distinguishing colour for Plácido, when the latter has absolutely no interest in women and can in no way be considered a "viejo verde"?¹¹ The answer probably lies in the best-known portrait of Rossini (by the Viennese artist, Mayer), which hung in the composer's home, was seen by countless people, and presented Rossini in a long green cape (Weinstock 269). Because mention of the green cape in *Fortunata y Jacinta* occurs directly after Plácido's (Rossini-derived) facial portrait, we may extrapolate that Galdós was still modeling his character after the maestro. This association between the green-caped Rossini and Galdós's character is corroborated in Part Three, as preparations are being made for Mauricia to receive the viaticum: "apareció Estupiñá, de capa verde, trayendo [...] el crucifijo de bronce de Guillerma [...]. Esta salió al pasillo, recibió de manos de Rossini la sagrada imagen" (III,vi, 2; 186). Clearly then, Plácido not only looks like Rossini, but also dresses like him.

Galdós repeatedly informs the reader that Plácido is a smuggler. How and why would it occur to Galdós to make this activity an important part of Plácido's characterization? It is most likely that Galdós knew that Rossini liked to jest that a well-known bust (with an uncharacteristic moustache) sculpted by Lorenzo Bartolini made Rossini look like a smuggler (Weinstock 467). Knowledge of this oft-cited joke may have been Galdós's stimulus for the climactic act for his Rossini-like character—the smuggling of *Fortunata's* baby from her apartment into his own. Stephen Gillman believes that this event is foreshadowed as early as Juanito's baptism and reiterated subsequently:

For example, he supplies the Santa Cruz family with untaxed cigars and cigarettes, and "cuando atravesaba las calles de Madrid con las cajas debajo de su capa verde, el corazón le palpitaba de gozo." [...] Later, he brings the "nacimiento" (at once a symbol of Jacinta's craving and a present for the child) into the house in the same fashion. But the most explicit, although unwitting, prediction is that of Juanito when he criticizes Jacinta's way of acquiring the child: "esto hija de mi alma no se debe ir a buscar a las tiendas, ni lo debe traer Estupiñá debajo de la capa como las cajas de cigarros." [...] It is clear that this event was in Galdós' mind from the beginning. (304, note 19)

Helping to shop for daily provisions is one of the main functions that Plácido performs for the Santa Cruz family. Given Plácido's years of experience and acquaintanceship with myriad vendors, no one in Madrid seems better at obtaining the best prices and the best quality. Here again, we have a parallel with the Rossini model. Because the composer was financially able to retire quite early, he had sufficient time for the activities he truly enjoyed, one of which was daily shopping for provisions in the markets and shops of Paris. His second wife, Olympe Pellisier, relied on him completely in this respect. On one occasion he is known to have climbed three flights of stairs to obtain a special Italian pasta, and on another occasion he travelled to the other side of Paris, just for a special kind of cheese (Weinstock 270-71). Plácido is similarly devoted to obtaining the right food supplies for Barbarita:

Como vivía en la Cava de San Miguel, desde que se levantaba, a la primera luz del día, echaba una mirada de águila sobre los cajones de la plaza. Bajaba cuando todavía estaba la gente tomando la mañana en las tabernas y en los cafés ambulantes, y daba un vistazo a los puestos, enterándose del cariz del mercado y de las cotizaciones. Después, bien embozado en la pañosa [verde], se iba a San Ginés. (I,vi,5; 256)

After fulfilling religious obligations at San Ginés by mid-morning (the time at which Rossini started his shopping), Plácido would lose “de su rostro rossiniano la seriedad tétrica que en la iglesia tenía, y volvía a ser el hombre afable, locuaz y ameno de las tertulias de tienda” (I,iii,3; 179). One of the principal uses Galdós makes of Plácido’s penchant for shopping is the creation of memorable humour, as in Plácido’s incongruous reporting to Barbarita concerning the quality and availability of the latest produce while they are praying in San Ginés:

La señora rezaba en voz baja moviendo los labios. Plácido tenía que decirle muchas cosas, y entrecortaba su rezo para ir las desembuchando.

—Va a salir la de D. Germán de la capilla de los Dolores ... Hoy reciben congrio en la casa de Martínez; me han enseñado los despachos de Laredo ..., llena eres de gracia; el Señor es contigo ... coliflor no hay, porque no han venido los arrieros de Villaviciosa por estar perdidos los caminos ... ¡Con estas malditas aguas...!, y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús... (I,vi,5; 256-57)

Again late in Part One, in an interior monologue, the name Rossini and the penchant for shopping are combined, as Galdós once more amuses the reader with a recurring admixture of the sacred and the profane: “Por más que el gran Rossini sostenga que aquel día oyó la misa con devoción, yo no lo creo. [...] El pensamiento se le escapaba hacia la liviandad de las compras, y la misa le pareció larga, tan larga, que se hubiera atrevido a decir al cura, en confianza, que se *menease* más” (I,x,4; 400).

What about Plácido’s living quarters? We remember that Fortunata, in reply to an inquiry by Juanito, specifies that Estupiñá’s tiny apartment (on the west side of the Plaza Mayor at No. 11, Cava de San Miguel) is located “en lo *más último de arriba*” (I,iii,4; 183), corroborating the narrator’s earlier statement: “No existen en Madrid alturas mayores, y para vencer aquéllas era forzoso apechugar con ciento veinte escalones, *todos de piedra*” (I,iii,3; 180). Where did Galdós get the idea to have Estupiñá live just under the roof of one of Madrid’s most famous buildings? Very probably he knew that, during Rossini’s first stay in Paris, the composer lived “in rooms up many narrow stairs under the roof of the Théâtre-Italien (Salle-Favort).” Anyone calling on him, even Pedro I, the former Emperor of Brazil, was forced to endure a very arduous climb (Weinstock 177). The “royalty” climbing the stairs in Galdós’s novel is the “Delfín,” Juanito Santa Cruz. The resulting first encounter on the stairway between Juanito and Fortunata has become a deservedly famous emblem of the novel as a whole, comparable to Don Quijote and the windmill or Robinson Crusoe and the footprint. Moreover, using a superb framing technique, Galdós brings the reader back to this very same locale for the novel’s dénouement (Bly). And, as noted ear-

lier, Galdós still has Rossini very much in mind when the narrator reminds us once again of Plácido's "perfil de cotorra" (IV,iii,7; 396) and his magpie-tipped cane (IV,iv,1; 405). Certainly, Galdós makes excellent use of the parallel between Rossini's and Plácido's living quarters.

Why does Plácido continually chatter like a magpie? As many readers would know, one of Rossini's best-known operas is *La gazza ladra* (*The Thieving Magpie*), with an overture popular in its own right and often heard in concerts and on hurdy-gurdies. Galdós may well have been thinking of this opera's title when he concluded thus the (already-quoted) physical description of Plácido: "La edad iba dando al perfil de Estupiñá un cierto parentesco con el de las cotorras" (I,iii,3; 177). "Cotorra" in Spanish means not only "parrot," but also "magpie," and Plácido is continually moving about and chattering like a magpie. In the 1867 article entitled "Rossini," in which Galdós mentions *La gazza ladra*, he designates Rossini as simply "locuaz." However, in *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Don Benito elaborates as he delineates his fictional character:

Estupiñá tenía un vicio hereditario y crónico, contra el cual eran impotentes todas las demás energías de su alma: vicio tanto más avasallador y terrible cuanto más inofensivo parecía. No era la bebida, no era el amor, ni el juego ni el lujo; era la conversación. Por un rato de palique era Estupiñá capaz de dejar que se llevaran los demonios el mejor negocio del mundo. Como él pegase la hebra con gana, ya podía venirse el cielo abajo, y antes le cortaran la lengua que la hebra. (I,iii,1; 168-69)

Because of this weakness, Estupiñá completely neglects the customers that enter his dry-goods store, in time is forced into bankruptcy, and loses his store completely. Nevertheless, this character, repeatedly called "Rossini," does not change, but can be seen still "cotorreando" quite late in the novel (IV,vi,10; 502).

In *Fortunata y Jacinta*'s delightful parodic substructure, which calls to mind Aristophanes's *The Birds*, Plácido serves the same function as the magpie in the bawdy Greek comedy, in that he also functions as a conduit to the "Land of the Birds" for young men seeking sexual encounters (Chamberlin, "Aristophanes" 171). In significant wording, Juanito explains to Jacinta his own first encounter with Fortunata: "Érase una vez...un caballero anciano muy parecido a una cotorra y llamado Estupiñá, el cual cayó enfermo y ... cosa natural, sus amigos fueron a verle ... y uno de estos amigos, al subir la escalera de piedra, encontró una mujer que se estaba comiendo un huevo crudo" (I,v,1; 204). Plácido's resemblance to a magpie is so pronounced that he good-naturedly accepts and treasures the gift of a magpie-tipped cane from Juanito and Jacinta when they return from their honeymoon. It is possible, of course, that someone may have given Rossini a magpie-tipped cane in celebration of his success with *La gazza ladra*, but one finds no confirmation of this article in the Rossini biographies. More likely, Galdós is reflecting the repeated mention in Aristophanes's *The Birds* that it was customary for kings in ancient Greece to carry sceptres topped with the figure of a bird (Chamberlin, "Aristophanes" 169). In any case, the one-sentence paragraph, "A Estupiñá le llevaban un bastón que tenía por puño la cabeza de una cotorra" (I,v,7; 237), does serve to effect an artistic closure, not only of Chapter Five, but

also of the entire first half of Part One. Nonetheless, Plácido is seen again with his magpie-tipped cane in Part IV of the novel. Now Fortunata's landlord, "Estupiñá el Grande" (IV, vi, 10; 506), "[con] su perfil de cotorra" (IV, iii, 7; 396), brandishes his bird-tipped sceptre— "[aquel] bastón cuyo puño era una cabeza de cotorra (regalo que le trajeron de Sevilla los señoritos de Santa Cruz)" (IV, iv, 1; 405)—like the great kings mentioned in Aristophanes's comedy. Finally, the magpie-like Estupiñá is associated during the climax of the novel with "el robo del chiquillo" (IV, vi, 14; 525), and we have already noted that he removed the baby from Fortunata's room "como ladrón o contrabandista" (IV, vi, 13; 523). Thus, the thieving magpie (and smuggler) fulfils his most important and climactic task.

Our study has demonstrated that Galdós indeed obtained and utilized considerable material from the biographies of Maximilian Franz von Hapsburg and Gioacchino Rossini in his creation and character delineation of Maximiliano Rubín and Plácido Estupiñá. Although both these characters have historical referents, Galdós's presentation of each is designed to evoke a different reader response. In the case of Plácido, Galdós insists on readily-recognizable physical description and frequently calls his character "Rossini." There is no doubt that Galdós, knowing that the maestro's popularity in Spain bordered on "Rossinimania" and that the composer encouraged and enjoyed parodies of himself, wished his reader to recognize his analogy. Thus, the reader is invited to participate fully in the playfulness of this special creative endeavour.

In contrast, in the case of Maxi Rubín, Galdós does not work with a readily recognizable physical description of a prominent contemporary personage, well-known to the average reader. Maxi's prototypical referent even underwent a complete physical change during the second part of his life, when the formerly emaciated Max Franz von Hapsburg became grotesquely obese. This latter image did not interest Galdós; he was interested only in the physical similarities between his character and the young Max Franz. Even if Galdós's contemporary reader might perceive aspects of Max Franz's life in the character delineation of Maxi Rubín, this reader would not be likely to recall a visual image of the young, frail Austrian prince. Consequently, Galdós concentrated on other aspects of Maxi's characterization, but did acknowledge his prototypical inspiration through the name of his character, thus allowing the alert reader to enjoy—even to the novel's very last sentence—the ironical incongruity that such a humble, unfortunate character might possess such an exalted, grandiose, royal name.

In both cases—Maxi Rubín and Plácido Estupiñá—Galdós worked with referents who had been contemporaries of, and had a great admiration for, Galdós's beloved Beethoven. By savouring these new details of Galdós's artistry in the creation and character delineation of Maxi and Plácido, we can now enjoy a richer understanding of Galdós's creative achievements and can, thus, participate vicariously in the novelistic adventures of two memorable characters in Galdós's great novel.

NOTES

¹ Additionally, Holmberg has convincingly demonstrated similarities between Balzac's eponymous protagonist, Louis Lambert, and Maxi Rubín (119-36). Also Randolph believes that Dr. Henry Maudsley's *Physiology and Pathology of Mind* (1867) may have contributed ideas utilized in the delineation of Maxi (49-54).

² Galdós's review was published 4 April 1866 in *La Nación* and, concerning the three composers (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven), Don Benito said that Castro y Serrano "penetra en sus hogares para hacérmolos más simpáticos con la relación de algunos datos interesantes de la vida doméstica. Las tres biografías son excelentes y en ellas vemos los caracteres tan diversos de los tres grandes maestros" (Shoemaker 320). Galdós also wrote about this same book in his 26 March 1866, "Revista de la semana" column in the *Revista del Movimiento Intelectual de Europa* (Hoar 177-79).

³ Max Franz died before the publication of the First Symphony, so Beethoven felt free to change the dedication to honour Gottfried van Swieten (Braubach 255; Marek 201).

⁴ All translations from the original German in Braubach's biography of Max Franz are my own.

⁵ Initially, Beethoven held Napoleon in great esteem and dedicated his Third Symphony ("Eroica") to him. After Napoleon crowned himself emperor, however, Beethoven angrily excised Napoleon's name from the manuscript. Beethoven maintained that only Rossini had surpassed him in popularity. Rossini, after hearing the "Eroica" for the first time, requested permission to visit Beethoven in homage. Their meeting and conversation in Vienna was recorded by others present and much publicized (Marek 569-72).

⁶ For details of Max Franz's illness, see Braubach (46-49). For the possibility that Maxi Rubín suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, caused by congenital syphilis, see Ullman and Allison (11).

⁷ For an appreciation of Galdós's exactitude concerning the location of this military school, see Ortiz Armengol (310).

⁸ During wartime, French propaganda charged Max Franz with a variety of sexual depravities. Most frequently—and most unlikely—he was depicted as an exploiter of young girls and married women (Braubach 245). In reality, "his main personal weakness was gluttony" (Marek 57).

⁹ The most common reminders are the magpie-like profile and the surname, Rossini.

¹⁰ Galdós also sharpened his focus by eliminating reference to other authors, keeping only that to Mesonero Romanos—but changing to a common birth date. Originally in Alpha, Galdós asserted that Estupiniá liked to say that his age was "once horas menos que Victor Hugo [...], un año más que Mesonero Romanos; tres menos que Bretón de los Herreros, y dos más que Hartzenbusch" (F 69). In Alpha (and in Beta) there is no mention of a prototype named José Luengo, whom Galdós mentioned as such in his *Memorias de un desmemoriado* (1663).

¹¹ We know that Galdós was well aware of the erotic connotations of the colour green. For example, the Marqués de Tellería In *La familia de León Roch* is such a "viejo verde" (I, ix; 783), that even his temples are "surcadas de venas verdes" (II, ix; 856). Equally emphatic is Galdós's use of erotic green in the case of Alejandro Miquis in *El doctor Centeno*, when the latter squanders his inheritance and ruins his health by consorting with prostitutes (Chamberlin, "Symbolic Green" 32). Within *Fortunata y Jacinta* itself, Galdós does use the erotic connotation of the colour green when, as part of his "curso de filosofía práctica," Feijoo says to Fortunata, "¡Qué necesidad tengo yo de que me llamen viejo verde?" (III, iv, 3; 102).

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